



## HOW DOES DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S *THE BUDDHA AND HIS DHAMMA* DIFFER FROM OTHER BIOGRAPHIES ON BUDDHA?

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### ABSTRACT

*The Buddha And His Dhamma* is the magnum opus of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar . The publication of the book not only invited attention of the Buddhist World but also attracted many critical comments ,controversies and allegations . Many question are raised and need to be addressed . The whirlpool of such questions is still hovering around . The Ambedkarites were eager to read *The Buddha* through Dr.Ambedkar's perspective . Orthodox Buddhists were looking for places to criticize him . Literary orthodox were determined to retaliate at all cost reasons whatever may be to keep it out of canon. Few were stubborn to decide genre of the book as mere a religious document. The close reading unlocks the literary treasure of *The Buddha And His Dhamma*.

**Key Words** : Expurgation , Pragmatism ,

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Making of *The Buddha and His Dhamma*.**

Nanak Chand Rattu's book Last Few Years of Dr. Ambedkar provides primary information about Dr. Ambedkar's *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book, Rattu writes despite the failing health Dr. Ambedkar planned to write and complete few books including *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. Nanak Chand Rattu was Dr. Ambedkar's private Secretary till his last breath . This book brings out many day to day interesting and reliable events of the stormy life of Dr. Ambedkar. He is an important eye witness of making of



*The Buddha and His Dhamma* . Many important writing work and typing work of the manuscripts of the book took place in the presence of Rattu.

He writes that Dr. Ambedkar knew fully well that no body would be able to complete this book and as such he was keen to get it published in his life-time . He witnessed Dr.Ambedkar working on it post mid night. The type-script of the book was corrected ,re-corrected ,paged , re-paged ,paragraphs numbered and renumbered .At times few lines or a para were cut away with the scissor and pasted at its proper places .At another time the whole chapter or a paragraph were recast. The pasting of loose slips also went on and then again retyping and the same process followed .After putting in very hard labour , four press copies were typed out on fine paper . Fifty copies of the book under the title *The Buddha and His Gospel* ! were then printed for private circulation and opinion .<sup>1</sup>

Rattu writes that on Thursday , March 15 , 1956 , Dr. Ambedkar wrote the preface in his hand .The 'Introduction' was dictated on the following day.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ambedkar faced financial problem in publishing the book. He asked Tata for financial help and Rs.3000 were sanctioned towards publication of the book. Dr. Ambedkar was in hurry to publish the book. The Printing of the book began under the supervision of S.S.Rege.on Sep.1956 ,two copies of the book were sent to Jawaharlal Nehru. Dr. Ambedkar spent near about five years over the book. The book was expiated to cost near about 20000 rupees. Dr. Ambedkar asked Government of India to purchase 500 copies of the book for the distribution among the various libraries in the country . But Nehru shown helplessness and send the case to Dr. Radhakrishnanan. Dr. Ambedkar wrote *The Buddha and His Dhamma* with hope , belief ,confidence and determination . But alas ! He could not see the book in his life time. Rattu mentions that all the four copies of the manuscripts disappeared all at once . Who did it and what was the motive behind this mischief is unknown . But government of Maharashtra gathered manuscripts through various sources and made it available to all.<sup>3</sup>

The work which has been described as Ambedkar's magnum opus was written during the years 1951 – 1956 and published by the People's Education Society in November 1957, almost a year after the great leader's death. In the preface he wrote for it in March 1956, but which did not appear in print until September 1980, Ambedkar traced the origin of the work to his article on 'The Buddha and the Future of His Religion'. In that article, he recalls, he had argued that the Buddha's religion was the only religion which a society awakened by science could accept and without which it would perish. He had also pointed out that in the modern world Buddhism was the only religion which it must have, if it was to save itself. But

<sup>1</sup> Last Few years of Dr.Ambedkar by Nanak Chand Rattu p.59

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p60

<sup>3</sup> Ibid p62 ,63 ,64



Buddhism made only a slow advance, and this was 'due to the fact that its literature is so vast that no one can read it [all] and it has no such thing as a Bible as the Christians have. On the publication of ['The Buddha and the Future of His Religion'] I received so many calls, written and oral, to write such a book. It is in response to these calls, that I have undertaken the task.'<sup>116</sup> The writing of *The Buddha and His Dhamma* was thus an attempt on Ambedkar's part to produce the Buddhist Bible which he had, in his 1951 article, pronounced 'quite necessary' if the ideal of spreading Buddhism was to be realized. Despite his use of the inappropriate term 'Bible', however, Ambedkar was far from regarding *The Buddha and His Dhamma* as possessing any special authority. As he wrote of the work in the (recently published) preface, 'How good it is I must leave it to readers to judge. As for myself, I claim no originality. I am only a compiler. All I hope is that the reader will like the presentation. I have made it simple and clear.'<sup>4</sup>

*The Buddha and His Dhamma*, a treatise on Buddha's life and Buddhism, was the last work of Indian statesman and Scholar Dr.B.R.Ambedkar. The book is treated as a holy text by Indian Buddhists and specially a way of living and thinking for Ambedkarites. For many of the literate it is the sole Buddhist text they own or have read. For the illiterates it is one they hear, read aloud to them in village and city slums, bearing in their eyes the authority of sacred scriptures. It may not be the exaggeration to say that the present new generation among literate Ambedkarite families grow reading *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. Forwarding the same then chairman of People's Education Society R.R.Bole writes, "The book is not only Dr.Ambedkar's monumental work but also his memorial enshrining the noblest fruit of his massive intellect. This book has taken its shape after his much arduous study and research."<sup>5</sup> Dr.Ambedkar mentioned that it is one of the three books which will form a set of the proper understanding of Buddhism. The other books are: [i] *Buddha and Karl Marx*; and [ii] *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India*.<sup>6</sup> It was compiled on the basis of canonical and non-canonical literatures in the different languages such as Pali, Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Japanese's as well as some other Indian (Apabhramsha) languages. The Texts belonging to different schools of Buddhism also were taken together and judiciously presented in a systematic manner. The texts belonging to Theravada, Sarvastivada and Mahayana schools of Buddhism were also referred to.<sup>7</sup> *The Buddha and His Dhamma* is the essence of established Buddhist Text. Dr.Ambedkar's views on Buddhism

<sup>4</sup> Sangharakshita –Ambedkar and Buddhism, Windhorse Publication -1986 Bhagwan Das (ed.), *Rare Prefaces Written by Dr Ambedkar* (Jullundur 1980)p.28-9

<sup>5</sup> *Buddha and his Dhamma* –forwarded –p15

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambedkar\\_buddha/00\\_pref\\_unpub.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambedkar_buddha/00_pref_unpub.html)

<sup>7</sup> A critical analysis of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar's *The Buddha and His Dhamma* by Balasaheb Ramchandra Salve .P1.



are neither Hinayan nor Mahayan<sup>8</sup>, in this book he shows a scientific understanding of Buddhism itself and reinterpreted the importance of Buddhism.

It is not difficult to see to which group of anthologies, and which sub-group within that group, *The Buddha and His Dhamma* belongs. In the first place, it has been compiled from Buddhist canonical and non-canonical literature, in Pali, Sanskrit, and Chinese, and from texts belonging to the Theravada, Sarvastivada, and Mahayana schools of Buddhism. In the second, it interweaves material illustrative of the Buddha's actual teaching with material illustrative of the story of his life, both of these being further interwoven with what Carus, in the case of *The Gospel of Buddha*, terms 'Explanatory Additions', the Explanatory Additions to *The Buddha and His Dhamma* being of course by Ambedkar himself. Between the work of the American scholar-scientist and the work of the Indian scholar-statesman there is, in fact, a closer resemblance than there is between *The Buddha and His Dhamma* and any of the other anthologies which have been mentioned. Both *The Gospel of Buddha* and *The Buddha and His Dhamma* are divided into eight books (as Ambedkar styles them), each book being subdivided into chapters and verses. More remarkable still, in the case of both works the verses are all numbered, the numbering being separate for each chapter.<sup>9</sup>

#### **How *The Buddha and His Dhamma* is different from other Biographies on Buddha ?**

*The Buddha and His Dhamma* is not the polemic, it is one of the great works in twentieth century Buddhist writing. Though it was published posthumously, Babasaheb was able to polish the nearly completed manuscripts. Primarily the book intended lay persons and not scholars. But it is said that Babasaheb had sent 150 typed copies of *Gospel of Buddha* [Earlier Title of *Buddha and His Dhamma*] to scholars in abroad and in India for their feedback.

Dr. Ambedkar in contrast to all other scholars of Buddhist literature who gave more importance to the religious, philosophical aspects, Dr. Ambedkar emphatically put forward its socio-political importance. His approach to Buddhism is social and ethical rather than philosophical and metaphysical (mystical). Nanak Chand Rattu once asked Dr. Ambedkar regarding his interpretations, and how these were different from those stated by the learned Bhikkus. Dr. Ambedkar replied, "The Bhikkus would be annoyed, but 'Never Mind'. The Buddhist Bhikkus abused me over this, but but why should the truth be hiding for all time to come".

<sup>8</sup> Two sects of Buddhism.

<sup>9</sup> Sangharakshita –Ambedkar and Buddhism, Windhorse Publication -1986



In the context of the present social condition of the society, the emphasis put by the Buddhism on the values of knowledge and evil of ignorance has no parallel in any other religion. Dr. Ambedkar has given, as stated earlier, new versions about the life of Buddha and his philosophy. He had quite good reason to suspect adulteration of the original Buddhist philosophy by the inimical Hindu influence.

To separate the substance from the chaff he used his own Nikayas, such as only those thinking may have emanated from Buddha himself which are rational and logical. Any argument which is not in the favour of man's welfare cannot be attributed to the teachings of the Buddha. Anything which is contrary to these two tests was taken as the later additions. There is also a third test and that is Buddha stated his views definitely and conclusively regarding matters about which he was certain. On the matters about which he was not certain he only tentative views. This can be clearly seen when we perceive the Book I.

As Gray Tartakove has demonstrated, Dr. Ambedkar was personally involved with graphic design, layout and over all production of his book. He had specific for its size, imagery, format, illustration and so on.

The Buddha and His Dhamma is a different book because Dr. Ambedkar rejected conventional explanations of Buddhism as often contradictory and attempted to replace them with arguments based on humanism and science. Yet, although the Dhamma is intended as an explication of Buddha's teachings, it is Dr. Ambedkar's political voice that pervades the text and establishes its historical importance. Dr. Ambedkar develops his interpretation of religion by taking the reader through the life of the Buddha and selecting those events in Gautama's life that most effectively communicate Ambedkar's own political message. Ambedkar thus speaks through Gautama and politicize the Buddha's philosophy as he theologizes his own political views. In a very real sense, the text represents Ambedkar's Dhamma as much as it does the Buddha's.<sup>[1]</sup> Some believe that Dr. Ambedkar wanted Protestant Buddhism and his book The Buddha and His Dhamma is its reflection.

Dr. Ambedkar writes many critical issues eloquently and there are no myths in his writings. He also rejects the possibility of any angels approaching Buddha and blab la stories. The Buddha and His Dhamma is an objective and scientific historical text on Buddhism. While speaking about the books, Dr. Ambedkar himself pointed, "books to be examined and tested by the accepted rules of evidence without recognizing any distinction between the sacred and the profane and with sole object of finding the truth".<sup>10</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup>Contursi, Janet A. [1993] 'Political Theology: Text and Practice in a Dalit Panther Community', Journal of Asian Studies, May 52[2], p.323.

<sup>10</sup> More, Dr. Vijay. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's The Buddha and His Dhamma: Historical Importance. p.488



Another important observation by Dr. Rhys Davids is also need to be quoted . He observes : ‘We should never forget that Gautama was born and brought up as a Hindu and lived and died as Hindu . He was the greatest and wisest and the best of the Hindu’s’.<sup>11</sup>On the other side Dr. Ambedkar was born as Hindu but he vowed not to die as a Hindu and as he was determined he died not as Hindu but a Buddhist . This journey from Hindu to Buddha has defiantly reflected in Dr.Ambedkar’s *The Buddha and His Dhamma* and makes it a different creation .

The another important feature this book is that Dr.Ambedkar’s religion , politics , philosophy, literature , nationalism and many aspects go hand in hand . That is why Buddhist critics say that the Dhamma preached by Dr. Ambedkar is not Buddhism but Ambedkarism .And rightly so. His Dhamma preaches the necessity to kill if needed and his message to India is that Indians should be determined to defend the independence if this land to last drop of their blood.

Dr.Ambedkar’s *The Buddha and His Dhamma* is different because the grounds for Buddha’s renunciation and redefined them . His major reinterpretation involves the Buddha’s renunciation of worldly life<sup>12</sup> , The four noble truth which present gospel of Buddha a gospel of pessimism Dr.Ambedkar reframed as gospel of optimism , the life is full of suffering this noble truth becomes „Second Postulate” and is converted into concern for human relationship<sup>13</sup>. the ambiguity about no-soul ,karma and rebirth is also removed and presented the monks purpose clearly This illustration takes a proactive stance towards radical change. He was comfortable in the role consciously reconstructing his chosen religion to meet the needs of the Dalit community he spoke for.<sup>14</sup>

*The Buddha and His Dhamma* appeals to man’s reason . Dr.Ambedkar discards the traditional “Four-sights theory of the Buddha’s Parivraja or renunciation .The traditional explanation is not plausible and does not appeal to reason .He doubt whether they form part of the original gospel , or are they a later accretion by the monks ? or intrusion of Brahminism ? And therefore he propagate the theory based on the dispute relating to the Rohini river-water as the probable cause ,instead. There are several places , he has given evidence of his rationalistic approach. It is for the first time he made distinction between Dharma and Dhamma .

The another important aspect of *The Buddha and His Dhamma* is that there is no place for God in the Buddha’s Dhamma.“Morality takes the place of God.” “Morality is the essence

<sup>11</sup>Nayyar ,Saneev .Life and Mission of Dr. Ambedkar .

<sup>12</sup> New Buddhism for New Aspirations-Virginia Hancock p.18

<sup>13</sup> ibid –p18

<sup>14</sup>New Buddhism for New Aspirations-Virginia Hancock p.17



of Dhamma .Without it there is no Dhamma.”. <sup>15</sup>It does not require the sanction of God .It is not to please God that man has to be moral . It is for his own good that man has to love man.<sup>16</sup>

It is also one of the important to note that many of his statements find resemblance to Dr.Ambedkar’s earlier attack on Hinduism .He legitimizes the use of Buddhism to oppose traditions that are unsatisfactory .<sup>17</sup>

The most important factor to mention here is that Dr.Ambedkar purified many adulterated aspect including use of supernatural elements in Buddha’s story .He regards the Buddha as an ordinary man who happened to teach an extraordinary way to overcome human problems , the dharma as secular ,pragmatic , and ethical basis for human flourishing here and now , and the sangha as community of men and women , monastics and lay people , who support each other’s efforts regardless of social or spiritual status .<sup>18</sup>

The another important characteristics of Buddha and His Dhamma is the Dr. Ambedkar has created a very strong character of Buddha as well as of Yashodhara. Traditionally, she is portrayed as a passive as passive, docile housewife and without any distinctive personality of her own. Dr.Ambedkar’s Yashodhara, in contrast, is a lady of great fortitude, courageous and pillar of great moral strength. In spite of future hardships in her life she encourages Buddha to take Parivraja and she is not just silent and sleeping queen as pictured by the tradition.<sup>19</sup>

Dr. Ambedkar lists some of the divergent interpretations of the Buddha’s teaching –Samadhi v Vipassana ,esoteric v exoteric , metaphysical v mystical , ‘ selfish abstraction from the world ‘ v ‘systematic repression of all feeling.’ To him they are all irrelevant .They arose from the ‘ a fancy of certain things’ from the that , during Dr. Ambedkar’s time most writers on Buddhism were historians , not Buddhists , or even anthropologists . The only question that matters is whether the Buddha had a social message .

Dr.Ambedkar undoubtedly was the true follower of the Buddha . Buddha told Ananda , his disciple , in Mahapariniban Sutta that his religion was based on reasons and experience and he advised his followers not to accept his teaching blindly without reference to reason and experience .<sup>20</sup>If following this message Dr.Ambedkar reviews adulterated Buddhism what is wrong in it ? He identified some cases which represents Brahminical reinterpretations .He

<sup>15</sup> Dr.B.R.Ambedkar ,The Buddha and His Dhamma ,p 322.

<sup>16</sup> Dr.B.R.Ambedkar ,The Buddha and His Dhamma ,p 323.

<sup>17</sup> ibid –p.19

<sup>18</sup> Review :Stephen Batchlor’s “After Buddhism : Rethinking the Dharma for secular age.” by Roger R. Jackson .

<sup>19</sup> A critical analysis of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar’s *The Buddha and His Dhamma* by Balasaheb Ramchandra Salve .P2.

<sup>20</sup>Ambedkar’s views on Buddhism Applicability to the Contemporary Society by K.Bala Ramkrishna p41[IERJ ]



concludes, “One has, therefore, to be very careful in accepting what is said in Buddhist canonical literature as being the word of the Buddha”. He himself set the criteria to determine the authenticity .

On 30 November 1956 Dr. Ambedkar spoke at the Banaras Hindu University and returned to Delhi. Asked by an admirer why the status of Buddha from different countries had different features, he replied that till 600 years after the Mahaparinirvana of Buddha there was no picture or statue of Buddha. Mahaparinirvana of the Buddha took place in 483 B.C. The First council of Bhikkhu after the passing away of the Buddha had to be held at Rajgriha under the president ship of the most senior monk Mahakshyap .<sup>21</sup> The aim of the council was to preserve the teachings of Buddha in their truth and purity without change or modification and also to achieve unity in that order; the first disadvantage was that there was no written script at that time and the second reason was a tendency among some monks to be lax towards the rule of order. Vinay Pitak by Uplai and Dhamma by Anand was repeated and thus it was orally preserved by the monks. The first effort to write Buddha's teaching was 100 years after the Mahaparinirvana of the Buddha. This important period of 100 years is the reason for Dr. Ambedkar to deviate from traditional stories related to Buddha. He concentrated on this period and found many things must have been included or misreported during this period. He accounts for errors in the transmission of the Buddha's doctrine by oral tradition. The chief audience of the Buddha's sermons was composed of Bhikkhus, who reported to the people at large 'what the Buddha had said.' In reporting the Buddha it has often been found that he has been misreported. Some cases were brought to the Buddha's attention while he was still alive.<sup>22</sup> He felt need to test discourses to see whether the Buddhist canon is not adulterated with Brahminism, one has to test them and he tested them. Dr. Ambedkar clears that as the Buddha is nothing if not rational or logical, other things being equal may be taken to be the word of Buddha. The second test is that the Buddha never cared to enter into a discussion which was not profitable for man's welfare.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, according to Dr. Ambedkar anything attributed to the Buddha which did not relate to man's welfare can not be accepted to the word of the Buddha. Bearing these tests in mind before deciding what the view of the Buddha was, Dr. Ambedkar wrote this version “ The Buddha and His Dhamm.”<sup>24</sup>

Whatever the orthodox doctors of Dhamma may say, Dr. Ambedkar's The Buddha and His Dhamma, taken as a whole epitomizes his philosophy of life, a philosophy he lived by, a socio-ethical philosophy for the good of mankind, for after all, his own people, the

<sup>21</sup> Unpublished Preface of *The Buddha and His Dhamma* p.7

<sup>22</sup> The Use of Buddhist Scriptures in B.R. Ambedkar's *The Buddha and His Dhamma* by Adele Fiske and Christoph Emmrich p.99.

<sup>23</sup> E-book of *Buddha and His Dhamma* by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Uploaded by Siddhartha Chabukswar p.6

<sup>24</sup> E-book of *Buddha and His Dhamma* by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Uploaded by Siddhartha Chabukswar p.7-8



“Untouchables” could not live isolated from the rest of the people .At the same ,like Moses of the Old Testament ,Babasaheb had to resurrect his people from the thralldom of Hinduism , hoping that one day all Indians would be persuaded by the teachings of the Buddha to change their ways , and accept the principles of Justice ,Liberty ,Equality and Fraternity .Like the Buddha, he showed the way , the Buddha’s way.

### **Justification for Omission :**

Buddhist literature is the vast expansion various discourses of the Buddha’s preaching .It can not be included in a single book. The writer has then his choice not only of selection but also of omission . Ultimately the selection of events , episodes ,scenes, encounters , dialogue , interviews is the only choice before the writer .And scholar , a trained barrister like Dr. Ambedkar has every right to review , analyze literature with the help of existing tools. He excluded or filtered many things for various reasons which can be discussed as follows :

### **Omission for Brevity :**

Dr. Ambedkar’s dealing with the Vinaya and the Suttapitaka texts and Bc-translations shows the abbreviations of tales without a change in the overall content ; for example , the accounts of Jivaka giving the Buddha a robe ,the reception of Upali , the barber , as a bhikku , and Anathapindika’s gift.<sup>25</sup>

### **Omission for Simplification :**

A few changes in the elaborate account in the Bc, beautiful in the original Sanskrit Kavya but over lush in translation ,improve the story of the attempt at mass seduction of Prince Gautama . In describing the quarrel among the Jain Niganthas over the succession , technical terms are condensed or omitted .<sup>26</sup>

The Fire Sermon of the Mahavaggais also simplified ; the concept of everything burning is omitted , the fire is only lust anger ,delusion [ omitted birth ,decay ,grief ,lamentation, suffering , dejection, despair ].

The doctrine of dependent origination [Patti Samudpat] is summarized briefly ,The fate of the unfortunate Sanajaya is not mentioned.<sup>27</sup>

### **Omission for the Expurgation of Miracles :**

<sup>25</sup> The Use of Buddhist Scriptures in B.R.Ambedkar’s *The Buddha and His Dhamma* by Adele Fiske and Christoph Emmrich p.101

<sup>26</sup> ibid p102

<sup>27</sup> ibid p 102



Ordinarily Dr. Ambedkar omits miracles, deities, demons, heaven and hell, even arhantship. The conversion of the five Parivrajakas is demythologized into their acceptance of the Buddha as a social reformer, in whom one feels a projection of Ambedkar himself: On the contrary The Mahavagga describes the same incident with supernatural, mythical elements.<sup>28</sup> The Buddha never resorted to the superhuman or the miraculous in propagating his doctrine. The miraculous wonders of psychic power that accompany the conversion of Angulimala, the robber, are omitted. The episode of walking versus standing still that in the text implies an actual occurrence in given an ethical allegorical sense.<sup>29</sup>

Dr. Ambedkar omits the cosmic effects of righteousness that the text adds – the course of moon, the stars, seasons, devas, rain, crops. The miraculous marks of the Buddha are mentioned with restraint. The magical travel of the seer Asita who ‘deported by the way of the wind as he had come ... in his flight’, is retold simply in the words, ‘Asita [...] departed for his hermitage.’ But in large number of the places Dr. Ambedkar himself has used marvels. Perhaps he felt the need to win his readers by some of the wonders which they were accustomed to seek in religion, before mitigating them in his own rationalism. For example, he speaks of how at the Buddha’s birth, Asita in the Himalayas hears the gods shouting ‘Buddha’ through space, sees them waving their garments, and has a vision of a shining child.<sup>30</sup>

Dr. Ambedkar’s new version of the mustered seed tale of Kisagotami involves both rationalization and deletion. He omits the facts of her ‘rebirth’ in a poor family and the disdainful treatment she received until her son’s birth. The child’s death leaves her distraught. As she goes from one door to door seeking medicine, each interview is recounted dramatically. In Dr. Ambedkar’s account, the child dies of snakebite and the young mother does not realize that the little red spot could cause death. The search for medicine is omitted, as is her insanity. Instead of being miraculously restored to reason, she is quietened by the conviction that death is the common lot. Instead of leaving the dead child in the charnel field to be devoured by dogs, she cremates the body; instead of renouncing the world and becoming a bhikkhuni, she reaches the conclusion that ‘all is impermanence; this is the law.’<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> ibid p.103.

<sup>29</sup> ibid p.103.

<sup>30</sup> The Use of Buddhist Scriptures in B.R. Ambedkar’s *The Buddha and His Dhamma* by Adele Fiske and Christoph Emmrich p.104

<sup>31</sup> ibid p104



Divine being are rarely beings are rarely mentioned by Ambedkar .Even ‘joy in a heavenly body’ is replaced by joy in charitable actions. The Naga king in the Mahavagga is a savage and venomous serpent with magical powers whom the Buddha overcomes with his greater magic ,conquering ‘the Nagas Fire by his fire’ and throwing him into his alms bowl .Dr.Ambedkar rationalize that snake into a naga king whose non-human traits are underplayed and who ends by worshipping the Buddha in his peace and serenity .<sup>32</sup>

Heaven as a goal to be won ‘even by the common people’ is omitted by Dr. Ambedkar.Hell is also not mentioned .

### **Omission for the Expurgation of Doctrine :**

Dr. Ambedkar omits doctrines related to rebirth in the karmic cycle . The shifts in emphasis made by him are usually ethical or merely to underline the divergence of his thought from Hinduism . He believes , ‘no man with intellectual and moral thirst can go to the Vedas and hope to satisfy his thirst.’ He returns several times to a denial of the existence of God. Thus , in Ambedkar’s simplified and decontextualized version , it is bound to remain somewhat obscure .He even concludes that the doctrine of past karma is purely Brahmnian , and ‘bodily introduced into Buddhism by some one who wanted to make Buddhism akin to Hinduism or who did not know what the what the Buddhist doctrine was .<sup>33</sup>

The above discussion makes it clear that Dr. Ambedkar made extensive but highly selective use of Buddhist Pali Scriptures and the Buddhist Mahayana Text , but that in expressing his most characteristics his most characteristics concepts of Buddhist doctrine , he had to adapt or interpolate these texts. The oppressors here are not Westerners but his own people , the religion rejected is not an imposed colonizing Christianity but ancient Hinduism .

The most surprising fact is that Dr. Ambedkar not only had to fight against Hindu Orthodoxy but also against Buddhist Orthodoxy . Orthodoxy as such , however , did not trouble Dr. Ambedkar. He found in Buddhism the religion most open to interpretation in terms of his own world vision ,derived largely from modern Western thought , which was to great extent, American Pragmatism . If Dr. Ambedkar departed from any Buddhist tradition , it was on the grounds of a challenge to orthodoxy through his own ideas of political and social practice. <sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> ibid p.105

<sup>33</sup>The Use of Buddhist Scriptures in B.R.Ambedkar’s *The Buddha and His Dhamma* by Adele Fiske and Christoph Emmrich p.110-111 .

<sup>34</sup> ibid p.112.



### Conclusion :

The present paper intends not only to study What Dr. Ambedkar says in Buddha and His Dhamma but it also intends to study How does he say them in his book. The book is written for ordinary people but the book is not ordinary . It is an extra ordinary work of literature by an extra ordinary man . It is the result of Dr. Ambedkar's three decades relentless struggle. It is the code of dignified life assumed to seventeen millions Dalits in India. It is the gem of literature remained out of canon due to ignorance ,immaturity of so called scholars. His literature is not for amusement of well paid and well fed people . But it is for half naked and half fed millions of people of India. This book is the charter of their liberation . What should be the purpose of a book ? The answer is read, "*The Buddha and His Dhamma.*"If we subtract all metaphysics ,superstitions , orthodoxy and heterodoxy from Buddhist canonical writings , what remains in the last is Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar.

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